Jack and the Crimson Waste

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Jack and the Crimson Waste

by lefemmerouge

Summary

They continued to walk across the dunes of the desert as the wind whistled around them...They heard, in the distance, the voice of an unfamiliar man. He shouted, from what they can hear, "Hello! Anyone out there!" Rather than shouting back, as that would lead to a useless shouting game, they ran in the direction of the voice, following the location of Bow's tracker. They had, now, stumbled upon the legendary and skilled warrior of Earth: Samurai Jack...Adora laughed. "Magic sword? Skilled warrior? You have clearly never heard of She-Ra"

This is the beginning of a wonderful story that brings together Samurai Jack, Glimmer, Adora, and Bow on an adventure in Etheria, to fight evil and bring the world into balance.

Notes

A revised/second attempt at this fic is available at Squidge World entitled "Jack, the Best Friends Squad, and the Crimson Waste". On 12/15/24, the revised/updated text, including rewritten dialogue, improved lines, and the like, has been reposted here, overwritting the original and flawed text.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

See the end of the work for more notes

One man stood strong, as wind whipped across the lifeless desert's dunes. It was a no man's land of sorts. He stood a little under 6 feet. His long black hair, tied up in a chonmage, blew with the wind. He was wearing white and gray gi, worn in the style of a kimono, a white obi tied around his waist, and a pair of wooden shoes, or geta. They clacked as he walked. This man was named Jack. He was also known as Samurai Jack or The Samurai by others he had fought with and befriended in the past. He had no idea where he was. Last he remembered, he'd jumped into a portal. He had to travel back in time to stop Aku. The latter was the master of darkness, the essence of evil, a shapeshifter who had imprisoned his world. He *had* to destroy Aku with with his magic samurai sword, a katana to be exact. His weapon, once wielded by his father, was formed by divinities of his world.

As the wind began dying down, he shouted. "Hello! Anyone out there!" His voice echoed across the landscape.

He received no reply. It appeared that the world had abandoned him. After all, he was in a desolate place, one of the worst he'd ever encountered. A thought crossed his mind: he was in a parallel dimension. Perhaps, the time portal had been distorted somehow, creating a wormhole through spacetime. He quickly dismissed this as happenstance. However, something else occurred to him: since Aku had tricked him and transported him through time, maybe this could be another one of his tactics. He shivered at the thought that he had been deceived again. He denied this as a possibility.

At the same time, three figures walked together on the other side of the desert. The first was Bow. He was a man of a tan complexion, with dark brown kinky hair, and eyes that were almost black. He ware a white sleeveless mid-drift, covered by armor with a breastplate embellished with a heart, a back piece, a metal sleeve on his shoulder, and a forearm guard. He carried a quiver of arrows over his right shoulder, and a bow in his right hand. He also wore jeans with a brown belt and nearly knee-high boots. He was accompanied by Princess Glimmer. She was a stocky and short woman, with thick and bushy hair colored pastel pink on the top and sparkling purple on the bottom. She sported curled bangs. Apart from her thick eyebrows and sideburns, she had tan skin, brown/pink eyes, and long eyelashes. She wore a sleeveless dark purple leotard, stopping at her mid-thigh, sitting underneath a light purple tunic, along with purple boots that matched her outfit. She had on light blue fingerless gloves, a blue cape that sparkled in the sunlight, and an armored circular plate on her left shoulder.

There was one final figure: Adora. She was the group's second female. She had dark blonde hair, brown eyebrows, and bluebell eyes. O this occasion, she wore a white short-sleeved shirt, underneath a red jacket with sleeves of a quarter-length, with a beige popped collar. She sported gray pants and a brown belt, fastened with a golden wing buckle. It symbolized her allegiance to the Rebellion. This was accompanied by red-and-white boots. She carried the Sword of Protection with her. This allowed her to turn into a princess of power, otherwise known as She-Ra.

One of the women was frustrated with the fact that they were still journeying across this barren wasteland. The hot heat of the sun beat down upon their necks and arms. Glimmer huffed and complained. "I knew this would be a disaster! Bow's dads were right!...We should have stayed away. I can see why no one comes back alive!"

However, Adora, countered that negative sentiment. She sternly addressed Glimmer. "We need to figure this out, otherwise we will never know what those constellations mean."

Bow hugged both of them. He exclaimed, at the top of his lungs, "best friend squad...EVER!"

They continued to walk across the desert's dunes. The wind whistled around them.

With the wind dying down, Bow looked at his tracker pad. He often used it to track down the technology of the First Ones on Etheria. He announced that he was "detecting a disturbance of some kind." He then added, to their surprise, "it looks like someone came out of a portal about one click from here, in this very desert." As Glimmer exuded a sigh of frustration. Adora agreed with Bow. She predictably added, "let's go check it out." She led the group forward. In the distance, they heard an unfamiliar man's voice. From what they could hear, he shouted: "Hello! Anyone out there!"

Rather than shouting back, since that would lead to a useless shouting game, they ran toward the voice, following the location on Bow's tracker pad. They stumbled upon the legendary and skilled warrior from Earth: Samurai Jack.

Coming closer, they all smiled, some nervously. Adora introduced herself. "Hello I'm Adora." She followed this with an inquisitive question. "Who are you and how'd you get here?"

Jack was skeptical and confused about his location. He cautiously identified himself. "I'm Jack. Some people call me Samurai Jack. I went through a time portal to go back and rid the world of the evil of Aku. But...somehow I arrived here."

He paused. After seeing Adora's sword, and Bow's quiver, he remarked, "so...fellow warriors, where might I be?"

Bow responded in kind. "You are in the desolate crimson wasteland of Etheria."

Jack shook his head in dismay. This was the *worst* thing that could have happened. "I must have been transported across dimensions. I need to get back to my own time and place to fight Aku, to defeat him...once and for all."

He paused, adding he could defeat Aku "by using this magic sword," pointing to his samurai sword. He followed this by describing the sword. "It is the sword for a righteous and skilled warrior who wishes to banish evil from the world."

Adora laughed. *He thought he was all that for having some fancy sword. Well, she would show him.* "Magic sword? Skilled warrior? You have clearly never heard of She-Ra. If you are such a skilled warrior, then prove it!"

She then shouted, "For the Honor of Grayskull!" She turned into an (almost) eight-foot-tall warrior named She-Ra. Different from her usual appearance, when Adora transformed into She-Ra she had long and wavy blonde hair, light blue eyes, a golden tiara, gold arm cuffs, and a white dress with a six-pointed-flower on the chest. She also had golden pauldrons on her sleeves and a v-shaped belt at her waist. She also wore white skin-tight shorts covered by white ruffles, white knee-high boots with golden trimming, and a knee-length red cape. Jack

looked at her and was utterly terrified. Predictably, he thought: *what have I gotten myself into? This is one of the toughest challenges I've faced.*

The swords of Jack and She-Ra clashed. Glimmer and Bow watched with astonishment, with both of them telling She-Ra to stop the fight, saying that it wasn't worth it. Each sword had a magical origin. No one sword is more powerful than the other. Despite Jack's developed fighting skills, his kimono was damaged. Like in past fights, he tore off the top half of his kimono, and continued to fight. He yelled "AGHHHHH!" as he went in for the attack. Even so, this skilled warrior was no match for the superhuman strength and agility of She-Ra. She had the ability to project a rainbow energy blast and transform animals into flying creatures. As Jack was being overpowered, Glimmer stepped in and teleported him away from the fighting. Bow fired a net around She-Ra, using one of his arrows.

The dust cleared. The fighting stopped. She-Ra turned back into Adora. She put her sword into its sheath on her back. Jack, in turn, put his sword away into a sheath hanging by his left leg, anchored by rope which went about his waist.

He bowed. He told Adora, "I know a great warrior when I see one. You are as strong as the warriors from where I come from."

Pausing he added, with great confidence, "it would be an honor to serve alongside you."

Continuing his pleasantries, he effusively commented: "now that I know this great warrior," and pointed to Adora. Her cheeks turned as red as strawberries, radiating happiness at his reverent praise. He then turned to Bow and Glimmer, and questioned them: "what's your names? Tell me about yourselves."

Bow described himself as a master archer and tech whizz. Glimmer noted her role as a princess who can teleport from one place to another and could remotely teleport her staff to herself! She noted her power over light, allowing her to create pink spheres, which can be used as a light source. She could also fire blasts of light at her opponents and temporarily blind them.

Astonished at these magical powers and staring at all three of them, he asked, "so what brings you to this desolate landscape?"

Bow thought about whether he would respond. He pulled out his tracker pad and added, "well, we were trying to figure out what this constellation means."

Exuding goodwill, Bow turned to Jack. "Perhaps you can join us on our quest. We can bring you to our home in Bright Moon, where you may find answers for how to get back to your own time."

Glimmer, frustrated and impatient with all the standing around, pleaded. *Anything to get them out of this damn desert would be good with her.* "Fine, let's get going already!"

And with that, all four were off on the quest. They still wanted to figure out the meaning of the constellation. There were hints it had profound importance in their fight to preserve Etheria.

On the way, Jack walked beside Adora. He inquisitively inquired, "where did you learn to be such a brave and powerful warrior? I haven't seen skills like that for years."

Surprised by the adoration, Adora smiled. She told him about her years of training as a Horde soldier. There were various courses and sessions with her team. She confessed that when she left the Horde and joined the Rebellion, she left her team behind (including a childhood friend). However, as she excitedly added, "I have two great friends right here!" She immediately hugged Bow and Glimmer. "What else could I ask for?" Their quest went onward.

Thinking they would never discover the meaning of the constellation of Serenia, a mystical First One, its connection to Maura, the previous She-Ra 1,000 years earlier, and the connection to a portal, they stumbled upon a decaying building. It was a temple in the wasteland. The sand dune partially engulfed it. Doing what she did best, Adora used her ability to read First Ones' writing to get them inside the temple, with the entrance unimpeded. After some exploring through the decaying facility, they discovered a screen. The message with the constellations, shown on Bow's tracker pad, was being sent to a place outside Etheria itself. Bow wondered if this was an indication that some of the First Ones were still alive, maybe even that some beings were living on another world. The latter didn't even cross the minds of Bow, Adora, and Glimmer. But they needed to take seriously.

With that, Bow began messing around with the keypad. Out of curiosity, he typed in SHE-RA. Nothing came up. He had the same result when typing in GLIMMER and BRIGHT MOON. As a wild guess, he typed in ADORA. A message appeared on the screen, shocking them all. The video that played showed a young baby girl with blonde hair. She was held by a woman with a flowing dress embroidered with flowers, bluebell eyes, and wavy blonde hair. The other figure, nearby, was a man with short-cut black hair. He wore a uniform that made it clear he was part of an army. His brown eyes almost felt like they were piercing through them.

The woman shouted. "The Horde is attacking! Whoever gets this message, please come and help us! The facility is being overrun." The man fired his laser beam rifle at the approaching Horde tanks.

"This will be," the man lamented, "Our last message. Please help, we can't stop them..." and the video cut off.

While Glimmer and Bow were shocked, Jack was puzzled, and Adora was aghast. These must have been, she conjectured, her parents. She was being held by her mom, the woman with the bluebell eyes and blonde hair.

Before she could take time to process all of this, the system, realizing that an "administrator" was not accessing it, declared, in a robotic voice: "unauthorized access detected. System shutting down."

This was different than what had happened at the Crystal Castle. But it was still terrifying. They could be trapped in the facility. Adora demanded Glimmer teleport them out of there. Luckily, Bow had already downloaded all the information from the temple onto his tracker pad, in case something funky happened... again. All four of them were teleported outside the

temple, to a nearby ridge. They watched as the system shut down. There was little they could do but change their course. After all, after the temple shut down, there were no records, or anything else, that had been left behind which gave them further information about the mysterious message.

With that, they walked back to Bright Moon, to rest. They wanted to help Jack get a portal back to his time. It was the least they could do. Glimmer, who was warming up to Jack a bit, beamed.

"Before you get the audience of my mother, it's probably best that you...," looking at his ripped kimono, "get some new clothes."

Using her magical powers, she teleported all three of them into her room. She pulled out a ruffled shirt and then declared, "this should do!"

Jack looked skeptically at the piece of clothing. He resigned himself to it: "this will do...although I would like to get a new white and gray gi to replace my old one." Such clothing was important, as it embodied his heritage and his family history. This especially mattered as he couldn't go back into the past, so his clothes allowed his culture to live on through him.

Glimmer chirped with a smile. "Sure, that can be arranged! How hard can it be to make a new gi for you?" she told him, although she had no idea what a gi was. She only used the word in order to maintain her composure before someone older than herself. Little did she know, every other time his kimono had been ripped, he had repaired it on his own, without the assistance of anyone else.

Before he was to meet Glimmer's mother, Queen Angella, Bow, puzzled, quizzed him. "You talked about Aku before when we first met in the wasteland. Tell us more."

He, Adora, and Glimmer sat patiently on the ground. They were in a semi-circle, ready to listen to Jack's story, treating it like an elder was telling a story from long ago. "Very well," Jack told them all, "I'll do my best to recount the evils of Aku." He cleared his throat, and began a story:

> "In my universe, many eons ago, an evil force radiated from the universe. It was beaten back by a team of mystical warriors with magical powers. But one part of it was not destroyed. It crash-landed on my home world, Earth, creating a huge crater, and began to grow. For years, people did little or nothing to stop its growth. Eventually, my people sent a legion of some of the most brave and noble warriors to defeat this menace. All were killed off, except the one who led this effort: my father. In an attempt to destroy it, he inadvertently released a manifestation of this evil, Aku, from his prison, unleashing him upon the world. After wreaking havoc on the nearby village, where I grew up, and tying up my father, mystical beings of the universe released him. A magical sword, coming from the righteousness within him, forged by these beings, was formed with the express purpose of killing Aku. My father did not defeat Aku, but banished him underground, where he stayed for many years."

With Bow, Glimmer, and Adora entranced, he continued:

"Once I had the appropriate training, I went to confront Aku, ignoring the warning of my father that I was not ready. I fought Aku with my magic sword. While Aku was gravely injured, and I was about to strike the final blow, he opened a portal in time. He sent me forward thousands of years to a time when he dominated the world. Therefore, it is my quest is to return to the past and kill Aku, ridding the world of such evil."

After he finished the story, Adora told him that it reminded her of the Horde, which was determined to destroy all that is good and decent in their world. It aimed to bring darkness to Etheria. All that stood in the way of such armies was the Kingdom of Bright Moon, the Whispering Woods, and the newly constituted Princess Alliance. She was part of the latter. It would be, she gushed, an honor to fight alongside him. He grinned. "I am dedicated to fighting any evil, whether it be Aku, or some other being or force, in order to restore balance."

Soon, he met, Angella. She was queen of Bright Moon. She had purple-tinted skin, long pinkish hair, a gem at center of her forehead (which functioned as sort-of-crown), and a pair of see-through, shimmery wings. She wore a pink leotard, light purple leggings, purple boots, a long blue cape, and a matching necklace and earrings. Her long white gloves reached to her elbows. She was anxious to meet him after she learned about his cunning nature and strong fighting skills. She wanted a master in the martial arts, melee, and swords, with peak abilities in agility, endurance, senses, speed, and strength, on their site. She didn't know of his hunting, survival, archery, marksmanship, or his dedicated willpower. If she had, it would have strengthened her view of Jack as a dedicated warrior. As a good mother, Angella wanted to know about Glimmer's friends. She wanted, no needed, to avoid having another episode like her daughter's previous attempt to hide Adora's true nature from her when she first arrived in Bright Moon a few months before.

Shaking his hand in the throne room, she thanked Jack for coming to meet her. She internally laughed at Jack's ruffled shirt, which did not match the lower part of his kimono. "There is so much for us to talk about. I have never seen anyone like you in these parts...I hear you are a great warrior. Will you help us in our quest to rid this world of evil?"

Jack already knew the answer. He enthusiastically answered, "yes!"

He knew this was the time to make a request. "With all the magical powers in a place like this, among your daughter, and Adora, have you constructed a time portal of some kind? I would very much like to get back to my time and place to defeat Aku, the manifestation of evil incarnate."

She hesitated, describing how all of their resources were being used to defend from attacks by the Horde, including the powers manifested in the 10-member Princess Alliance. They couldn't afford, in her summation, to use their resources, to build a inter-dimensional time portal.

She then lamented, "Entrapta would be the perfect person to help you with constructing such a device, but..." She sighed. "She is now working with the Horde, bringing her technology genius and inventor abilities to...the side of evil."

For Jack, he was glad to hear this. Knowing that he might be interested, she told him that their spies had "indicated that the Supreme Leader of the Horde, Lord Hordak, is building a portal, likely with the help of Entrapta."

She cast doubt on any possible effort to get to the portal. She noted that the princesses were playing a fundamentally defensive role and were not on the offensive. She reminded him that these princesses barely escaped alive when they attempted a rescue mission of her daughter who was kidnapped by the Horde.

Accepting this reality, Jack fretted. "Even with this opportunity closed to me, I will still help you defeat evil in your land." He optimistically told her, "perhaps, when the war with the Horde is over, then such a portal can be built through the use of powers wielded by all that are all good and righteous, even if...a tech genius is on the side of evil." Angella bid him farewell.

As night approached, Jack, Adora, Glimmer, and Bow went to their respective rooms in Castle Bright Moon. They slept soundly and awaited the next day with vigor.

End Notes

In this story I extensively used pages on the She-Ra and Princesses of Power fandom, specifically those for Bow, Adora, Glimmer, George and Lance, Queen Angella, The Princess Alliance, The Rebellion, Etheria, and Lord Hordak, along with two pages on the Samurai Jack fandom, one for Samurai Jack himself and the other for his katana. Also the pages which gave various hints on what words to use for expressions, like Mark Nichol's "100 Words for Facial Expressions" were helpful in writing this story.

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